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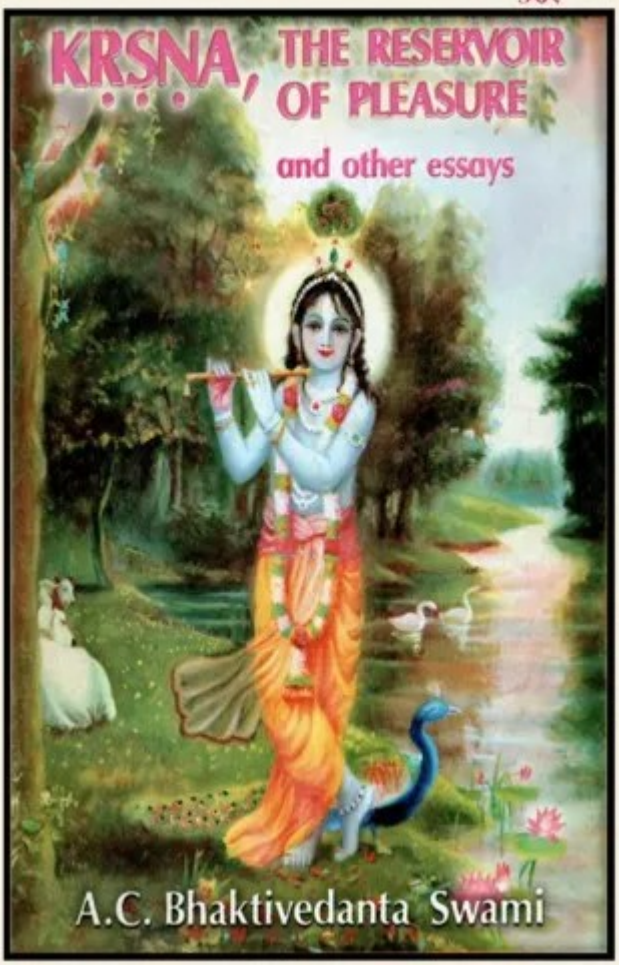
KRSNA, THE RESERVOIR OF PLEASURE

and other essays



A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure

The Source of All Happiness **His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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About This Book

Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure is a short essay by Śrīla Prabhupāda explaining the meaning of the name "Kṛṣṇa" and how connection with Him is the source of all true happiness.

Who is the Spiritual Master?

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the present *ācārya* or teacher by example in the unbroken chain of disciplic succession begun five thousand years ago by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the founder and spiritual master of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which now has thousands of members and over

ninety centers around the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the United States seven years ago under the instruction of his spiritual master, who requested that the ancient knowledge of the Vedic literatures be given to the English speaking world. Thus Śrīla Prabhupāda is now freely distributing this pure transcendental knowledge, which is the real wealth of India, the eternal teaching of man's relationship to the Supreme.

Kṛṣṇa, the Reservoir of Pleasure

Kṛṣṇa—this sound is transcendental. Kṛṣṇa means the highest pleasure. All of us, every living being, seeks pleasure. But we do not know how to seek pleasure perfectly. With a materialistic concept of life, we are frustrated at every step in satisfying our pleasure because we have no information regarding the real level on which to have real pleasure. For the last few weeks we have been learning that we are not this body; we are consciousness. Not exactly consciousness, for consciousness is actually the symptom of our real identity: we are pure soul, now merged within this material body. Modern material science lays no stress on this; therefore the scientists are sometimes misled in their understanding of spirit soul. But spirit soul is a fact, which anyone can understand by the presence of consciousness. Any child can understand that consciousness is the symptom of the spirit soul.

Now the whole process we are trying to learn from the *Bhagavad-gītā* (*The Song of God*) is how to bring ourselves to this level of consciousness. And if we act from the level of consciousness, then we may not be pushed again into the level of this bodily conception; and, if we can continue on that level, if we can continue to act in pure consciousness, then, at the end of this body we shall be free from material contamination, our spiritual life will be revived, and the ultimate result will be that in our next life, after leaving this body, we shall have our full, eternal spiritual life. Spirit, as we have already discussed, is described as eternal.

Even after the destruction of this body, consciousness is not destroyed. Rather, consciousness is transferred to another type of body and again makes us aware of the material conception of life. That is also described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. At the time of death, if our consciousness is pure, we can be sure that our next life will not be material—our next life will be spiritual. If our consciousness is not pure at the point of death, then, after leaving this body, we shall have to take another material body. That is the process which is going on. That is Nature's law.

We have now a final body. The body which we see is the gross body. It is just like a shirt and coat: within the coat there is a shirt, and within the shirt there is a body. Similarly, the pure soul is covered by a shirt and coat. The garments are the mind, intelligence and false ego. False ego means the misconception that I am matter, that I am a product of this material world. This

misconception makes me localized. For example, because I have taken my birth in India, I think myself Indian. Because I have taken my birth in America, I think myself American. But as pure soul, I am neither Indian nor American. I am pure soul. These others are designations. American, or Indian, or German, or Englishman; cat or dog, or bee or bat, man or wife: all these are designations. In spiritual consciousness we become free from all such designations. That freedom is achieved when we are constantly in touch with the supreme spirit, Kṛṣṇa.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is simply intended to keep us in constant touch with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can be in constant companionship with us because He is omnipotent. Therefore, He can be fully in touch with us by His words. His words and He are not different. That is omnipotence. Omnipotence means that everything relating to Him has the same potency. For example, here in this material world, if we are thirsty and we want water, simply repeating "Water, water, water, water," will not satisfy our thirst, because this word has not the same potency as water itself. We require the water in substance. Then our thirst will be satisfied. But in the transcendental, absolute world, there is no such difference. Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's quality, Kṛṣṇa's word—everything is Kṛṣṇa and provides the same satisfaction.

Some people argue that Arjuna was talking with Kṛṣṇa because Kṛṣṇa was present before him, whereas in my case, Kṛṣṇa is not present. So how can I get directions? But that is not a fact. Kṛṣṇa

is present by His words—the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In India, when we speak on the *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* we regularly perform worship with flowers, or with other paraphernalia, as is required for worshiping. In the Sikh religion also, although they have no form of the Deity, they worship the book *Granthasahib*. Perhaps some of you are acquainted with this Sikh community. They worship this *Grantha*. Similarly, the Moslems worship the *Koran*. Similarly, in the Christian world, the *Bible* is worshiped. It is a fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is present by His words. Kṛṣṇa is also present by His words.

These personalities, either God or the son of God, who come from the transcendental world, keep their transcendental identities without being contaminated by the material world. That is their omnipotence. We are in the habit of saying that God is omnipotent. Omnipotence means that He is not different from His name, from His quality, from His pastimes, from His instruction. Therefore, the discussion of *Bhagavad-gītā* is as good as discussion with Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Kṛṣṇa is seated in your heart, and in my heart too. *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati* [[bg/18/61|[Bg. 18.61]]]. God is situated in everyone's heart. God is not away from us. He is present. He is so friendly that He remains with us in our repeated change of births. He is waiting to see when we shall turn to Him. He is so kind that though we may forget Him, He never forgets us. Although a son may forget his father, a father never forgets his son. Similarly, God, the original father of

everything, everybody, all living entities, will never forsake us. We may have different bodies, but they are our shirt-coats. That has nothing to do with our real identity. Our real identity is pure soul, and that pure soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. There are 8,400,000 species of life. Even the biologist and the anthropologist cannot calculate this accurately, but from authoritative, revealed scripture we get this information. Human beings represent 400,000 species, and there are 8,000,000 other species. But Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, claims that all of them, whether beast, man, snake, god, semi-god, demigod—anything whatever—all of them are, in reality, His sons.

The father gives the seed, and the mother receives the seed. The body is then formed, according to the mother's body. And when the body is completely formed, it comes out—either from cats, from dogs, or from man. That is the process of generation. The father gives the seed, and it is emulsified with two kinds of secretion in the womb of the mother, and on the first night the body is formed just like a pea. Then, gradually, it develops. There are nine holes that develop: two ears, two eyes, nostrils, a mouth, a navel, a penis, and an anus.

According to his last *karma,* or action, one gets this body to enjoy, or to suffer. That is the process of birth and death. And after finishing this life, again one dies, and again one enters into the womb of some mother. Another type of body then comes out. This is the process of reincarnation.

We should be very diligent as to how we can discontinue this process of repeated birth and death and change of body. That is the prerogative of the human form of life. We can stop this process of repeated change through birth and death. We can get our actual spiritual form again and be blissful, full of knowledge and eternal life. That is the purpose of evolution. We should not miss this. The entire process of liberation begins just as we have now begun this chanting and hearing. I wish to point out that this chanting of the holy name of God (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare) and hearing the truths of the *Gītā* is as good as bodily association with Kṛṣṇa. That is stated in the *Gītā*. This process is called *kīrtana*. Even if one does not understand the language, still, just by hearing, he acquires some piety. His assets lead him to a pious life, even if he does not understand—it has such power.

There are two topics concerning Kṛṣṇa. Two kinds of topics, actually. One topic is this *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is spoken *by* Kṛṣṇa. And the other topic concerning Kṛṣṇa is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That is spoken *about* Kṛṣṇa. So there are two types of Kṛṣṇa *kathā* (topics), and both of them are equally potent because they are connected with Kṛṣṇa.

Because the *Bhagavad-gītā* is spoken on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra some people have asked what we have to do with the battlefield. We have nothing to do with any battlefield. We are after knowledge of the spiritual sphere. Then, why should we bother about this battlefield? Because Kṛṣṇa is on the battlefield,

and therefore the whole battlefield has become Kṛṣṇa-ized. Just as when an electric current is passed into some metal, the whole metal becomes surcharged with electricity; so too, when Kṛṣṇa is interested in some matter, that matter becomes Kṛṣṇa-ized. Otherwise, there would be no need of discussing the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra. That is His omnipotence.

This omnipotence is also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There are many Kṛṣṇa *kathās*. The Vedic literature is full of them. *Vedas* means that they are Kṛṣṇa *kathās*. Scripture, including the *Vedas,* may appear to be different, but they are all meant for Kṛṣṇa *kathā*. If we simply hear these topics on Kṛṣṇa, then what will be the result? It is pure transcendental vibration, and the result will be spiritual consciousness.

We have accumulated many inauspicious things within our hearts due to our material contamination during the course of many, many births. Many, many births—not only this birth, but part births as well. So, when we search into our hearts with the Kṛṣṇa *kathā,* then the contamination we have accumulated will be washed off. Our hearts will be cleansed of all rubbish. And, as soon as all the rubbish is cleared off, then we are situated in pure consciousness.

It is very difficult to eradicate all the false designations from oneself. For example, I am Indian. It is not very easy to immediately think that I am not Indian, but pure soul. Similarly, it is not a very easy task for anyone to end his identification with these bodily designations. But still, if we continue hearing the

Kṛṣṇa *kathā,* it will be very easy. Make an experiment. Make an experiment to see how easily you'll be able to free yourself from all these designations. Of course, it is not possible to clear out the rubbish from the mind all of a sudden, but we are immediately aware that the influence of the material nature has become slackened.

The material nature is working in three modes—goodness, passion, and ignorance. Ignorance is hopeless life. Passion is materialistic. One who is influenced by the modes of passion wants this false enjoyment of material existence. Because he does not know the truth, he wants to squeeze out the energy of the body just to enjoy this matter. That is called the mode of passion. As for those in the mode of ignorance, they have neither passion nor goodness. They are in the deepest darkness of life. Situated in the mode of goodness, we can understand, at least theoretically, what I am, what this world is, what God is, and what our interrelationship is. This is the mode of goodness.

By hearing Kṛṣṇa *kathā,* we will be freed from the stages of ignorance and passion. We will be situated in the mode of goodness. At least we'll have the real knowledge—knowledge of what we are. Ignorance is like the animal existence. The animal's life is full of suffering, but the animal does not know that he is suffering. Take the case of a hog. Of course, here in New York City no hog is seen. But in villages in India one sees the hog. Oh, how miserable his life is, living in a filthy place, eating stools and always unclean. Yet the hog is very happy by eating stools, and

having constant sexual intercourse with the she-hog and just getting fat. The hog gets very fat, because of the spirit of enjoyment which is there—although, for him, it is sensual enjoyment.

We should not be like the hog, falsely thinking that we are very happy. Working hard all day and night, then having some sex life—we think that in this way we are very happy. But this is not happiness. This has been described in the *Bhāgavatam* as a hog's happiness. Man's happiness is when he is situated in the mode of goodness. Then he can understand what true happiness is.

In our daily routine, if we hear this Kṛṣṇa *kathā,* the result will be that all the dirty things in the heart, accumulated life after life, will be cleared out. As a matter of fact, we will see that we are no longer in ignorance or in passion, but are situated in the mode of goodness. What is that position?

We will find ourselves joyful in every circumstance of life. We will never feel morose. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* we find that this is our *brahma-bhūta* (highest stage of goodness) situation. The *Vedas* teach us that we are not this matter. We are *Brahman*. *Ahaṁ brahmāsmi*. Lord Śaṅkarācārya preached this gospel to the world. We are not this matter; we are *Brahman,* spirit. When spiritual realization is actually accomplished, then our symptoms will change. What are those symptoms? When one is situated in his own spiritual consciousness, then he will have no hankering and no lamentation. Lamentation is for loss, and hankering is for

gain. Two diseases characterize this material world: What we do not possess, we hanker after. "If I get these things I'll be happy. I have no money, but if I get a million dollars, then I'll be happy." And when we have a million dollars, somehow it will be lost. So we'll cry, "Oh, I have lost it!" When we hanker for earning, that is a kind of distress. And when we suffer loss, that is also distress. But if we are situated in *brahma-bhūta,* we will neither be distressed nor will we hanker. We will view equally everyone and everything. Even if we are situated in the midst of fiery turbulence, we will not be disturbed. That is the mode of goodness.

Bhāgavatam means the science of God. If the science of God is persevered in, we will be situated in the *brahma-bhūta* status. From that *brahma-bhūta* status, we have to work, for work is recommended here. So long as we have this material body, we have to work. We cannot stop working; it is not possible. But we have to adopt the tactics of *yoga,* and in this way, even by doing some ordinary work, which, by destiny or circumstances we are put into, there is no harm. Suppose that, in one's own occupation, one must speak a lie or his business can't go on. Lying is not a very good thing, so one concludes that the business is not based on very moral principles and one should therefore give it up. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* however, we find instruction not to give it up. Even if we are put in such circumstances that our livelihood cannot go on without some unfair practice, we should not give it up. But we should try to make it purified. How

is it purified? We should not take the fruitive result of our work. That is meant for God.

Sukṛta means pious activities. And *duṣkṛta* means impious activities. On the material level we can be pious or impious. Either we are performing some pious activities, or we are performing some impious activities—or we have a mixture, pious and impious. Lord Kṛṣṇa advises that we should act with knowledge of, or devotion to the Supreme. What does that knowledge mean? It means that I am the part and parcel of the supreme consciousness, or that I am not this body. If I identify myself as an American, as an Indian, or this or that, then I am on the material Plane. We should identify ourselves as neither Americans nor Indians, but as pure consciousness. I am a subordinate consciousness of the supreme consciousness; in other words, I am the servant of God. God is the supreme consciousness, and I am His servant. So, for our present understanding, subordinate means servant.

We don't ordinarily carry out the work of a servant in relationship to God. Nobody wants to be a servant, but everyone wants to be the master, because to become a servant is not a very palatable thing. But to become the servant of God is not exactly like this. Sometimes the servant of God becomes the master of God. The real position of the living entity is to be the servant of God, but in the *Bhagavad-gītā* we can see that the master, Kṛṣṇa, became the servant of Arjuna. Arjuna is sitting in the chariot, and Kṛṣṇa is his driver. Arjuna is not the owner of the

chariot, but in the spiritual relationship we should not cling to the concept of the material relationship. Although the whole relationship, just as we have experience of it in this world, is there in the spiritual world, that relationship is not contaminated by matter. Therefore it is pure and transcendental. It is of a different nature. As we become advanced in the spiritual conception of life, we can understand what the actual position in the spiritual, transcendental world is.

Here the Lord instructs us in *buddhi-yoga*. *Buddhi-yoga* means that we have full consciousness that we are not this body; and if I act with this understanding, then I am not body—I am consciousness. That is a fact. Now, if we act on the level of consciousness, then we can overcome the fruitive result of good work or bad work. It is a transcendental stage.

It means that we are acting on another's account—on the Supreme's account. We are not liable to loss or gain. When there is gain, we should not be puffed up. We should think, "This gain is for the Lord." And when there is loss, we should know that this is not our responsibility. It is God's work—His. Then we will be happy. This we have to practice: everything on account of the Supreme. This transcendental nature we have to develop. This is the trick of doing work under these present circumstances. As soon as we work on the level of bodily consciousness we become bound by the reaction of our work. But when we work through spiritual consciousness, we are not bound either by pious activities or by vicious activities. That is the technique.

Manīṣiṇaḥ—this word is very significant. *Manīṣī* means thoughtful. Unless one is thoughtful, he cannot understand that he is not this body. But if one is a little thoughtful he can understand, "Oh, I am not this body. I am consciousness." Sometimes, in our leisure time, we can see, "Oh, this is my finger, and this is my hand. This is my ear, and this is my nose. Everything is mine, but what I, what I?" I am feeling this is mine, and that I am. Simply a little thought is required. Everything is mine—my eyes, my finger, my hand. My, my, my, and what is the I? The I is that consciousness, in which I am thinking, "This is mine."

Now, if I am not this body, then why should I act for this body? I should act for myself. Then, how can I work for myself? What is my position? I am consciousness. But what kind of consciousness? Subordinate consciousness—I am part of the supreme consciousness. Then, what will my activities be? My activities will be under the guidance of the supreme consciousness, just as in the office, the managing director is the supreme consciousness. For example, in the office everyone is working under the direction of the manager; therefore they have no responsibility. They have only to discharge their duties. Either pious or impious duties—never mind. In the military line, too, the order of the captain or the commander is there. The soldier has to execute it. He does not consider whether it is pious or impious. That does not matter. He simply has to act, then he is a real soldier. He acts in that way and he gets his reward. He gets title and honor. He doesn't care. The commander says, Just go

and kill the enemy, and he is rewarded. Do you think that by killing one gets reward? No—it is for the duty discharged.

Similarly, here the situation is that Kṛṣṇa is instructing Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme consciousness. I am consciousness, the part and parcel of the supreme consciousness. So my duty is to act according to that supreme consciousness. For example, I consider my hand as a part of my body. Now, it is moving in its own way. "As I want, let my hand be moved. Let my legs be moved. Let my eyes be opened and see." So, I am dictating, and these parts are working. Similarly, we are all part s and parcels of the Supreme. When we train ourselves to move and act in accordance with supreme consciousness, then we become transcendental to all these pious or impious activities. That is the technique. What will the result of this technique be? We become free from the bondage of birth and death. No more birth and death.

Modern scientists and philosophers do not think about these four things: birth, death, disease, and old age. They set them aside. "Oh, let us be happy. Let us enjoy this life." But human life is meant for finding a solution to this bondage of birth, death, disease and old age. If any civilization has not found a solution to these four problems, then that is not a human civilization. Human civilization is meant for finding a complete solution to these things.

So here in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the Lord says, *karma-jaṁ buddhi-yuktāḥ*. *Karma-jaṁ* means whenever there is action

there will be some reaction. If one acts in badness, there will be a bad reaction. But reaction, either good or bad, is, in the higher sense, all suffering. Suppose that by good action I get a good birth, fine bodily features, and a good education. All these good things I may have, but that does not mean that I am free from material pains. The material pains are birth, death, old age and disease. Even if I am a rich man, a beautiful man, an educated man, born in an aristocratic family, etc., I still cannot avoid death, old age, and disease.

So, we must not be concerned with pious activities or impious activities. We must be concerned with transcendental activities only. That will save us from this bondage of birth, death, old age and disease. That should be our aim in life. We should not be hankering after good or bad things. For example, suppose one is suffering from some disease. He is lying in bed, eating, passing nature's call uncomfortably, and taking bitter medicines. He always has to be kept clean by the nurses; otherwise there is an obnoxious smell. While he is lying in this condition some friends come to him and ask how he is feeling. "Yes, I am feeling well." What is this well? Lying in bed uncomfortably taking bitter medicine, and unable to move! Yet despite all these inconveniences he says, "I am well." Similarly, in our material conception of life, if we think, "I am happy," that is foolishness. There is no happiness in material life. It is impossible to have happiness here. In this condition, we do not know the meaning of happiness. That's why this very word is used, *manīṣiṇaḥ*—thoughtful.

We seek happiness by some extraneous, artificial means, but how long does it last? It will not endure. We again come back to sorrow. Suppose, by intoxication, we feel happy. That is not our actual happiness. Suppose I am made unconscious by chloroform, and I don't feel the pain of an operation. That does not mean that I am not having an operation. This is artificial. Real pleasure, real life exists.

As is commanded in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the thoughtful give up the reaction of work, being situated on the level of pure consciousness. The result is that this bondage of birth and death, disease and old age comes to an end. This end is in union with the true identity, Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure and eternal bliss. There, indeed, is the true happiness for which we are intended.